

#1



# Fax Cover Sheet

Atlantic City Light Tackle Charters, LLC  
Capt. Bob Paxson  
609-517-1099

August 4, 2003

**To:** Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries

**From:** Capt. Bob Paxson  
Atlantic City Light Tackle Charters

**Subject:** Opening of the EEZ to Striped Bass Fishing (Public Comment)

**Number of pages including cover sheet...** 1

Dear Ms. Lange,

My public comment in ref to 50 CFR Part 697 (Opening of the EEZ to Striped Bass Harvest) is simply to OPEN IT. Recreational boats are fishing the EEZ for Striped Bass, anyway and it's very hard for the Coast Guard to monitor them. The Coast Guard has much more important work to do.

There seem to be plenty of Striped Bass around and I do not think that opening the EEZ, especially off NJ where the Striped Bass is a Gamefish, would make too much of a difference.

Thank You,  
Capt. Bob Paxson  
Atlantic City Light Tackle  
701 Caspian Avenue  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Division of Marine Fisheries

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
William G. Ross, Jr., Secretary

Preston P. Pate, Jr., Director

July 30, 2003

Ms. Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange:

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries submits this letter in support of the National Marine Fisheries Service revising the Federal Atlantic striped bass regulations for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), by removal of the moratorium on the harvest. As documented in Amendment 6 to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass, the overall abundance of the stock is very high and fishing mortality remains below the target rate.

The recommendation in Amendment 6 to open the EEZ to striped bass harvest recognizes the ability of each state to enforce commercial and recreational limits at the point of landing without jeopardizing the success of rebuilding this stock. A 28-inch (total length) minimum size limit should be implemented for the recreational and commercial Atlantic striped bass fisheries in the EEZ. Hard quotas control the Atlantic striped bass commercial harvest, and when the quotas are reached the fishery is closed. Any overages must be taken off the next year's quota. These measures coupled with the monitoring requirements and triggers contained in Amendment 6 for the Atlantic striped bass population would allow for quick action if needed for additional stock conservation.

Recreational and commercial striped bass catches are occurring in the EEZ but possession is prohibited resulting in significant discards in some fisheries. Opening the EEZ will allow this discarded bycatch of striped bass to be landed within quota limits and make more efficient use of the stock without affecting mortality rates.

In summary, the Division and numerous state and federal agencies have worked long and hard to restore the Atlantic striped bass population. We are committed to ensuring the population maintains a restored status, and this recommendation is consistent with that commitment.

Sincerely,

Preston P. Pate, Jr., Director  
NC Division of Marine Fisheries

cc: North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission  
Sara Winslow

**To:**

Anne Lange, Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
FAX: 301-713-0596

**From:**

George Ouimet  
406 Verbank Road  
Millbrook, NY 12545

Dear Anne:

This memo is to register my objection to opening the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) to commercial fishing of the Atlantic Striped Bass stocks. Every scientific article I read, and the anecdotal evidence I see myself from fishing, leads me to believe that the current moratorium on striped bass fishing has not been enough to lead to a viable, reproducing, healthy stock of fish.

Even though the numbers are up, the size distribution of fish is not a normal, natural distribution. Larger, older, more productive stocks are not at healthy or natural levels.

Please do not allow commercial fishing to decimate the striped bass population again. With current commercial fishing technology, and an overzealous regulatory system (too many permits allowed) it will not take long to completely reverse any gains made in the last 13 years. This also does not address the ancillary (non-targetted species) kill that comes with any commercial fishing operation.

Thank you.

George F. Ouimet

Avid catch and release salt water fly-fisherman.

8/7/03 #6



Mark Gustavson  
45 Fifth Avenue #10B  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 727-2686  
mgustav@panix.com

August 4, 2003

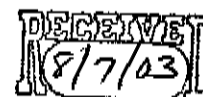
Ms. Anne Lange  
Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
NMFS  
Room 13317  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange:

As a member of Stripers Forever (<http://www.strippersforever.com>) I am in favor of making the striped bass a gamefish. I must ask you to not support the opening of the EEZ to commercial fishing. If you are not aware of Stripers Forever, please visit their web site.

Sincerely,

Mark Gustavson



## **National Party Boat Owners Alliance, Inc.**

Phone: (860) 535-2066

Fax: (860) 535-8389

181 Thames St.  
Groton, CT 06340

e-mail [capt.glas@snet.net](mailto:capt.glas@snet.net)

Date: Aug. 6, 2003

To: Anne Lange, Chief

State-Federal Fisheries Div.

Office of Sustainable Fisheries

Org.: NMFS

Fax: 301-713-0596

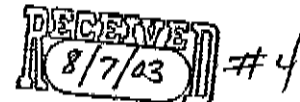
No. of pages:1

From: Capt. Bradley J. Glas, Pres.

We support your move to allow Atlantic Striped Bass to be taken from EEZ waters. With all of the rest of the tight regulations in place for the harvest of these fish, it makes no sense to have to throw back a perfectly good fish just because it is caught outside the current demarcation line.

The prohibition continues to be a particularly difficult concept to explain to anglers aboard our vessels. Invariably, they question what difference it makes if they catch a Striped Bass in federal waters, or a few miles inshore of that. To put it nicely, they think it is a bunch of bureaucratic nonsense.

The sooner you remove that prohibition, the better.



Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Fax (301) 713-0596 (By Fax)

Dear Ms. Lange:

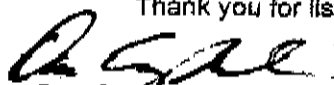
As I understand the current proposal, the National Marine Fisheries Service is considering an end to the moratorium on the harvest of Atlantic striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone, imposing instead a minimum size in the Zone of 28 inches, while allowing states to impose greater restrictions on vessels licensed in their jurisdictions. This proposal is a terrible mistake, and I think it is of somewhat doubtful legality. I'll leave the legality to another time. What shouldn't happen now is for anyone to misunderstand where this proposal will take us. It will take us backwards; it threatens fish and fishing, and personally I love both so I want to object.

Female strip bass under 28 inches are immature, or at best just marginal spawners. So, even assuming that a significant proportion of the migratory fish are below 28 inches, no real protection is offered the brood stock in the open ocean. Please don't market the new rule as some form of compromise between economics and conservation. It's not.

And please don't ask anyone to believe that independent action of the states might backstop a flaw in the federal move. Too many states have trouble resisting commercial interests, and it is unlikely that one will tow a hard line if others let their commercial fleets go at it. Nor would it matter much. Isolated partial action won't stop the kill. If the federal government doesn't have the will to say no, it's probably over for this fishery, again. The recovery of striped bass stocks has been remarkable. But then so was the stock market in the 1990's. A fishery can collapse as easily as a market, and if the Zone is opened and investment in the fishery is stimulated, think how much harder it will be to close it on the approach of the next collapse, with commercial boats pointing to the idling of real assets and the loss of real jobs. Keep it shut now.

Folks are just learning how to grow these fish in aqua-culture and that is the best long-term way to fill the commercial demand for table fare. As for the fishery, and the economic activity it can support, the best thing is to leave well enough alone. Recreational fishermen, who by and large are not equipped to go out three miles for this fish, nevertheless spend hundreds of millions pursuing rockfish, create all kinds of jobs, and support valuable conservation initiatives. And there is already a sizable in-shore commercial catch. Why would any government agency want to rock this boat?

Thank you for listening,

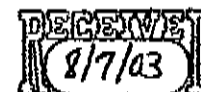
  
Dan Campbell  
11341 Vale Road  
Oakton VA 22124

Aug 06 03 07:15p

Felix &amp; Barbara Pitts

757-898-8069

p.1



#3

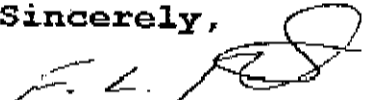
Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Fax (301) 713-0596.

Dear Ms Lange:

It is my opinion that until the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) can demonstrate that opening the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to any kind of striped bass fishing will not disrupt management of striped bass in any state, it is precluded from doing so. Any effort to open the EEZ will face the dubious legal task of reconciling a maze of federal and state management plans.

The NMFS should not open the EEZ unless it can determine that such action would not disrupt management of striped bass by the states.

Sincerely,

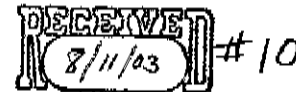


8/6/2003

Felix L. Pitts  
Concerned Sports Fisherman  
Member CCA and the Peninsula Saltwater Sport Fisherman  
Association

506 Piney Point Road  
Yorktown, VA 23692

757-898-8069  
e-mail: [flandbahpitts@cs.com](mailto:flandbahpitts@cs.com)



Georges C. Boyer  
P. O. Box 567  
Far Hills, NJ 07931

Monday, August 11, 2003

Anne Lange Chief State/Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD. 20910

Fax 301-713-0596

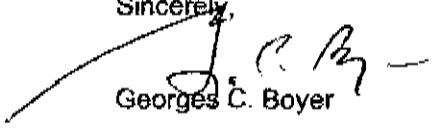
50 CFR Part 697  
Docket No 030714172-3172-01  
I.D. 063003A  
RIN 0648-AR33

Dear Ms. Lange:

Please be advised that the undersigned OPPOSES the opening of the EEZ zone to commercial and recreational fishing with a 28" limit on Striped Bass.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Georges C. Boyer





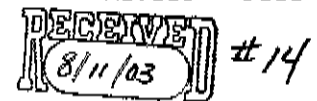
August 13, 2003

Ms. Anne Lange  
National Marine Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway  
Room 13317  
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Subject: Comments to the proposed opening of the Exclusive Economic Zone

I am against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed regulation that would open the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to commercial/recreational fishing for Striped Bass. Two of the main reasons that I feel this way is (1) The large biomes of ocean going female striped bass is our breeding stock, and placing more recreational /commercial harvest pressure on them, does not make sense. (2) At the present time all the data that is presented by the striped bass Fish Management Groups says that the health of striped bass has recovered completely, how ever for year 2004 there are regulations in effect to reduce the harvest total for striped bass. The state of Virginia has to reduce their recreational/commercial harvest by 20 percent, so I can not understand how opening the EEZ is not going to effect the management plans that are in place to protect the species and not cause further harvest reduction in the Future. I appreciate your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact me.

David Agee-Recreational Fishermen  
702 Lake Dale Way  
Yorktown, VA 23693  
757-865-8022



To: Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring MD 20910

Anne Lange,

As a light tackle guide in the Chesapeake Bay area, and fishing for stripe bass approximately 100 days a year. I am OPPOSED to the opening of the EEZ to commercial or recreational fishing. Striped Bass should be given game fish status.

Thank you,  
Capt. Mark Horner  
ASALTEDFLY Charters  
P.O. Box 1003  
Sandston Va 23150



August 7, 2003

MS. Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

MS. Lange;

I am writing you asking TO KEEP in effect the Federal Atlantic striped bass regulations regarding the Exclusive Economic Zone (waters 3 to 200 miles offshore) in tack.

There is no need to add additional waters for the commercial and sports fisherman to deplete the stocks of these prime reproducing fish. There are plenty of inshore waters to catch this splendid sports fish. These fish, the 28 inch or greater size striper is the answer to reproducing the species. Enough of them are being caught now in the inshore waters. If we want to continue catching the striper we still need good restrictions on them.

A good number of my old fishing buddies have gone to their graves, believing the striper preceded them and there was no more to be caught. Fortunately, I am still around to witness the remarkable come back the striper has made. We DO NOT need to start the cycle all over again due to poor management of the species.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Baker  
616 Secotan Rd.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451



*Kingfisher' Meadowside, Grindleton, Lancashire, England BB7 4RR Tel/Fax  
44+ (0) 1200 441276 - 10 August 2003 E-mail martin@flyfishing.plus.com*

Anne Lange Chief State Federal Fisheries Div.  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway RM> 13317  
Silver Spring MD. 20910  
Dear Madam

A writer, author, broadcaster and TV presenter I was disturbed to hear about the proposed increase in the netting regulations reference to Amendment 6 of the striped bass management plan. As I see it the current issue of a new disease that cannot be identified and is already infecting over half the Chesapeake population will not be sorted out by allowing commercial fishing to increase. I feel it is unnecessary and very foolish to even consider opening the EEZ-Zone to commercial and recreational fishing.

I often use as an example the fishery regulations for striped bass on the eastern seaboard when I am talking with Members of Parliament about preserving the bass stocks in UK waters. What you have achieved over the years working with sports fishers, environmentalists and commercial fishing interests has been outstanding. Do not undo all the good work that has been achieved over the past years. Now is the time to conserve and see what happens. If you give in to commercial fishing interests, which means an increase in netting, I believe this disease that has the potential to be devastating the striped bass population.

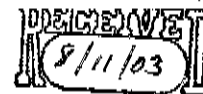
It must be pointed out that the striped bass is worth hundreds of dollars as a sports fish and only a handful of dollars as dead fish on the fish mongers slab. The commercial caught fish can only be caught once but as a sports fish they are caught several times over. Its a well known fact the fish are too valuable to catch once.

I believe the tourist trade will be hit very hard, many UK anglers visit the eastern seaboard for one or two weeks of striper fishing. In fact I will be across again in September with a group of anglers. Remember we hold our fish stocks in trust for the youngsters not yet born. We must not forget kids hooked on fishing don't stick an hypodermic needle in their arm later in life. I am more than willing to visit and discuss the effects of commercial netting on your tourism industry and fish stocks.

Your sincerely

Martin James

Supporting Crossroad Carers charity and Multiple Sclerosis Society  
check out [www.martinjamesfishing.co.uk](http://www.martinjamesfishing.co.uk)



# 11

**Swyn Esqair, Drefach Felindre, Llandysul SA44 5XG, Wales, UK**

**Tel: 01559 371879**

**Email: [pat@first-nature.com](mailto:pat@first-nature.com)**

11th August 2003

**Ms Anne Lange**

**Chief State Federal Fisheries Div.**

**Office of Sustainable Fisheries**

**National Marine Fisheries Service**

**1315 East West Highway RM 13317**

**Silver Spring MD. 20910**

Dear Ms Lange

**Commercial Exploitation of Striped Bass Stocks**

I am writing to express serious concern that you are considering opening up the EEZ-Zone to increased net fishing, given the current disease concerns and the evident need for stock conservation.

We in Llandysul Angling Association have some 1000 anglers who fish our waters each year (which makes us a small but significant section of Britain's three million anglers), and very many of them now travel abroad in search of sport fishing for such prized species as striped bass. These anglers recognise the importance of not killing the fish they catch and they will, I am quite sure, wish to hear that in coming to your decision you have considered the wider interests of conservation as well as angling tourism and the contribution it makes to the local economy. I would, therefore, appreciate it if your department could keep me informed of your decision on this important conservation issue.

Yours sincerely

**Pat O'Reilly MBE**

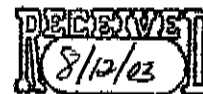
**Chairman, Llandysul Angling Association**

Aug 11 03 11:28p

Louis Michael Rayeur

2125296917

p.1



August 11, 2003

Anne Lange  
Chief State/Federal Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service

Dear Ms. Lange,

I am writing to voice my concern about opening the EEZ-Zone to commercial striped bass fishing and urge you to work against this proposal. Another population crash like the one that occurred in the 1980's would be devastating personally to those of us who enjoy recreational fishing and economically to those of us who make a living off sport and recreational fishing. As you must know, sport and recreational fishing account for billions of dollars in revenues for small businesses in this country. A short term gain for one business would mean a more far reaching and devastating loss for another. This approach makes no sense.

The proposal to open the EEZ-Zone to commercial striped bass fishing is particularly disturbing given the recent studies showing that other commercial fisheries like tuna, sword fish and shark have been reduce by 90%. Individuals have a vested interest in keeping stocks strong; obviously commercial fisheries do not. Please do the right thing for the good of the many in lieu of the few and stop this injustice from happening.

Respectfully,

L. M. Rayeur  
NY, NY

10/22/2003 21:14  
43 York Drive  
Coventry, RI 02816  
401-828-9465  
whiteghos1@aol.com

NMFS SF 301-713-0596 → 93014272515

NO.889 0015

WHITE  GHOST



RECEIVED  
8/13/03 #19

Anne Lange Chief State/Federal Fisheries Div  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, Md.

August, 13 2003

Dear Ms. Lange:

As a U.S. Coast Guard captain and guide working in my fathers business, I'm writing to let you know that I am totally against opening the EEZ-Zone to any type of commercial or recreational angling for any reason.

The stripers have a disease that is currently unknown and has only been seen in farmed raised fish in hatcheries. This disease, which I believe is called mycobacterious is also known as Fish handler's disease and is harmful to the fish as well as humans and is currently suspected that it has infected both commercial and recreational anglers.

To open the EEZ-Zone to pressure and add all those fish to the market when this problem has yet to be solved is bordering on the verge of lunacy. There are already reports from well-respected organizations that if you see a fish with this condition, under no circumstances should you eat it and handle it only with gloves. Are we going to allow infected fish to reach the public market place, in the name of commercial angling? I certainly hope not.

I am totally against opening this area to any form of fishing. It should be kept closed, as it has been for the past 13-years.

Thank you for your time and trouble in regards to this matter.

Sincerely,

Capt. Justin M. White  
White Ghost Guide Service Ltd.



**Triton**

Aug. 13 2003 04:46PM P2

FAX NO.: 8289465

FROM: WHITE  
8/13/03

10/23/2003 09:32AM

43 York Drive  
Coventry, RI 02816  
401-828-9465  
whiteghos1@aol.com

WHITE



GHOST



RECEIVED  
8/13/03 #20

Anne Lange, Chief State/Federal Fisheries Div.  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway Room 133217  
Silver Spring, Md.

August 13, 2003

Dear Ms. Lange:

I am writing to you in regards to the opening of the EEZ-Zone to commercial and recreational angling.

In light of the disease that now permeates the stock called mycobacteriosis, or "Fish Handler's Disease", it seems absurd to even consider opening this once closed area.

As a businessman who depends on this fishery I find it amazing that anything that appeases the commercial sector is up for grabs no matter what the consequences or the cost.

I am totally opposed to opening the EEZ-Zone and hope that someone there has the sense to see how devastating this could be to a fishery that is already stressed in some areas.

The technical committee of the ASMFC gave this info about this disease to the board back in 1997. They paid absolutely no attention to it at all. I was at that meeting.

Please do not allow this to happen.

Thank you for your time in regards to this matter.

Sincerely,

Capt. Jim White  
White Ghost Guide Service Ltd.



**Triton**

Aug. 13 2003 04:46PM P1

FAX NO.: 8289465

FROM: WHITE

8289465

10/23/2003 09:32AM



Ed Callahan  
570 Plymouth Street  
Bridgewater, Mass. 02324

RECEIVED  
8/13/03 #21

Anne Lange Chief State/Federal Fisheries Div  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 133217  
Silver Spring Md.

August 11, 2003

Dear Ms. Lange:

I'm writing to you to express my most serious concern regarding the opening of the EEZ-Zone to commercial and recreational fishing after a 13-year closure.

As you are already aware that zone is in federal waters and there will not be any way to police it at the present time. Currently, the U.S. Coast Guard is stretched to the limit trying to cover drugs and terrorism and has no money in their budget for this type of enforcement.

You must also be aware that the illegal by-catch in all states where commercial fishing is allowed is totally out of control and no system yet exists to curtail or control its destructive practices.

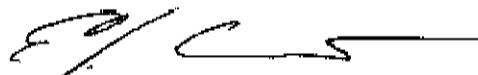
And finally, the American Littoral Society, The University of Maryland Eastern Shore and the National Coalition for Marine Conservation are now reporting on a disease that is estimated to be affecting almost half the population of Chesapeake Bay striped bass. This problem needs further study and review before additional pressures are placed on the stock.

To open more area to recreational and commercial fishing with all these questions still left unanswered, and the possible adverse affect on the striped bass population and their numbers, it seems that this is one area that is still under control and one less problem that needs solving.

I respectfully request that you not consider re-opening the EEZ-Zone to any type of recreational or commercial fishing until these questions can be answered by the scientific community and shown that opening this area will have little or no impact.

Thank you for your time and trouble in regards to this matter, I hope that you will consider my comments when making your decision.

Sincerely,



Ed Callahan  
Recreational Angler

RECEIVED  
8/14/03 #32  
Duplicate

August 13, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-713-0596 Fax

Dear Ms. Lange

As a law-abiding boat owner and recreational striped bass angler, I oppose any movement to open the EEZ for striped bass fishing.

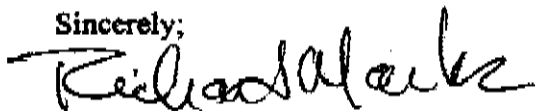
Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the recent round of commercial quota increases might take years to be identified. What we do know is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

The petition to ASMFC requesting the opening of the EEZ was at the request of commercial anglers who want to catch more striped bass. However, this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. The increase in commercial harvest is at the expense of the recreational fishing public, which deprives them of the privilege of catching large fish.

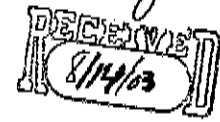
In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, it will be impossible to police that large of an area. At a recent Mass DFW meeting, a commercial angler admitted that he and many others are regularly defying the law now by keeping fish caught from the EEZ. Therefore, it is evident to everyone that we cannot monitor the EEZ as it is! Lastly, stripers landed in the EEZ will pose regulatory problems for game fish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC that do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters. The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. I believe the fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ; this year commercial anglers caught their limit of more than 1,000,000 lbs. of stripers by August 10<sup>th</sup>! Many fishers think of the NMFS as being anti-recreational fishing, and have a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing.

Please, DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!

Sincerely;



Richard Marks, 3 Longbrook Rd., Byfield, MA 01922, (978) 462-9961



August 13, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-713-0596 Fax

Dear Ms. Lange

As a law-abiding boat owner and recreational striped bass angler, I oppose any movement to open the EEZ for striped bass fishing.

Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the recent round of commercial quota increases might take years to be identified. What we do know is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

The petition to ASMFC requesting the opening of the EEZ was at the request of commercial anglers who want to catch more striped bass. However, this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. The increase in commercial harvest is at the expense of the recreational fishing public, which deprives them of the privilege of catching large fish.

In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, it will be impossible to police that large of an area. At a recent Mass DFW meeting, a commercial angler admitted that he and many others are regularly defying the law now by keeping fish caught from the EEZ. Therefore, it is evident to everyone that we cannot monitor the EEZ as it is! Lastly, stripers landed in the EEZ will pose regulatory problems for game fish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC that do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters. The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. I believe the fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ; this year commercial anglers caught their limit of more than 1,000,000 lbs. of stripers by August 10<sup>th</sup>! Many fishers think of the NMFS as being anti-recreational fishing, and have a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing.

Please, DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!

Sincerely;

Richard Marks, 3 Longbrook Rd., Byfield, MA 01922, (978) 462-9961

RECEIVED  
8/14/03 #25

August 14, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange

As a recreational striped bass fisherman, I am opposed to any action that would open the EEZ to the taking of striped bass.

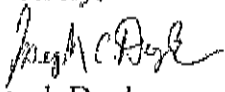
Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the most recent round of commercial increases will not be known for some time into the future. What is known is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

The ASMFC petition to open the EEZ was spearheaded by representatives of a few coastal states to make it easier for their commercial fishermen to catch more striped bass. In fact this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. That increase in commercial harvest comes at the expense of the recreational fishing public who are being deprived of a public resource.

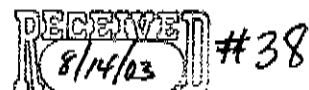
In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, there have been reports that a large percentage of Chesapeake Bay striped bass carry a dangerous micro bacterial infection. Anglers in the New England states have reported catching diseased fish, so it is inevitable that stripers in the EEZ will also be infected. Further, it will be impossible to police an opening of the EEZ, and stripers landed in the EEZ will pose problems for gamefish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC which do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters.

The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. The fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ. NMFS is constantly attacked as anti recreational fishing, and for having a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing. **DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!**

Sincerely,

  
Joseph Doyle  
406 N. Lancaster Avenue  
Margate, NJ 08402

8/14/03



N.O.A.A

50 CFR. PART 697

Docket # 030714172-3172-01

ID 063003A

To Whom it May <sup>Should</sup> Concern:

I am very disturbed to find out after 13 years of closure and the bass fishing is only beginning to get better again that you are considering opening the EEZ-zone to commercial & recreational fishing. The commercial fishermen are dogs that will rape our fishery for all it worth and the Coast Guard will be unable to enforce the 20' limit. The results would devastate this now recovering fishery. It is your responsibility to "do the right thing" and keep it closed! to protect this valuable resource for ~~our~~ future child

"Keep The EEZ-ZONE  
Closed!"

Louis Cascio

73-29 53 RD

Maspett NY 10378

(212)-780-6728

Thank You

RECEIVED  
8/14/03 45

August 14, 2003

Anne Lange Chief, State/Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD. 20910

Ref: 50 CFR Part 697  
Docket No 030714172-3172-01  
I.D. 063003A

Fax: 301-713-0596

Anne I am EXTREMELY opposed to opening up the EEZ-Zone to commercial and recreational fishing!

*Albert L. Floyd*

Albert L. Floyd  
40 Winton Rd  
E. Windsor, CT

FROM : CONDUX

PHONE NO. : 6179345809

AUG. 14 2003 10:00AM P1



Captain Dave DeLory  
53 Arrowhead Road, Duxbury, MA 02332

RECEIVED  
8/14/03 #29

FAX

301-713-0596

TEL & FAX 781-934-~~5809~~  
5809

AUG. 15, 03

ANNE LANGE - CHIEF  
State-Federal Fisheries Div.  
OFFICE OF Sustainable Fisheries  
NMFS 1315 EAST WEST Highway  
Room 13317  
Silver Springs, MD. 20910

As A charter Fisherman out of Green  
Harbor, MA. I fully subscribe To THE  
opening OF THE EEZ To THE Striped Bass  
Fishery.

In Addition To THE Reasons For doing  
THIS in your Communication, it would ALSO  
Reduce Vessel Concentration in highly  
Regulate Areas thereby improving Safety,  
particular in heavy Fog Conditions.  
ie. Fishing Vessels would be dispersed  
over A much Larger Area of Fishable Waters.

Thank You For Noting my Comments.

D. DeLory

**Mark Gustavson**  
**P. O. Box 240**  
**Mastic Beach, New York 11951**  
**mgustav@panix.com**



August 14, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

301-713-0596

Ms. Anne Lange

Chief State/Federal Fisheries Division

Office of Sustainable Fisheries

National Marine Fisheries Service

1315 East West Highway room 13317

Silver Spring, MD. 20910

RE: 50 CFR Part 697  
Docket No 030714172-3172-01  
I.D. 063003A  
RIN 0648-AR33

Dear Ms. Lange:

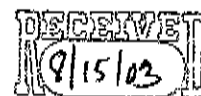
Please be advised that the undersigned OPPOSES the opening of the EEZ zone to commercial and recreational fishing with a 28" limit on Striped Bass.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Gustavson





# 117

8 August 2003

Ms. Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange:

For years I have watched the bay and ocean fisheries ebb and flow, 52 to be exact!! The Bay and ocean may recover in the years to come, so we must be good stewards for that to happen, perhaps not for ourselves, but at least for our grandkids.

Removing the moratorium on the catching of stripers in the EEZ is a move in the wrong direction!! Giving the states the ability to adopt rules for fishermen and vessels will create a legal maze that will never be controlled. Until we can demonstrate that opening the EEZ will not disrupt the management systems in place in each state, I strong recommend we leave the EEZ off-limits.

An attempt was made in 1995, I believe, to do the same thing. The NMFS agreed that the EEZ should remain closed. Nothing, in my opinion, has changed since then, so I suggest that the status quo be maintained.

Sincerely,

E. L. Parkman  
1036 Bay View Blvd.  
Norfolk, VA 23503

*Kingfisher' Meadowside, Grindleton, Lancashire, England BB7 4RR Tel/Fax  
44+ (0) 1200 441276 - 10 August 2003 E-mail martin@flyfishing.plus.com*

RECEIVED  
8/15/03 #116

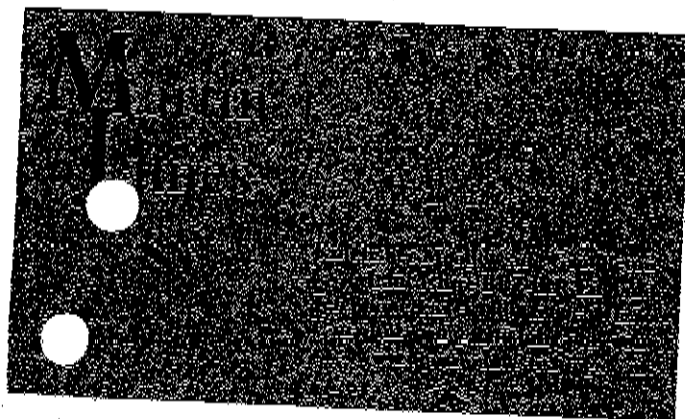
Anne Lange Chief State Federal Fisheries Div.  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway RM> 13317  
Silver Spring MD. 20910  
Dear Madam

A a writer, author, broadcaster and TV presenter I was disturbed to hear about the proposed increase in the netting regulations reference to Amendment 6 of the striped bass management plan. As I see it the current issue of a new disease that cannot be identified and is already infecting over half the Chesapeake population will not be sorted out by allowing commercial fishing to increase. I feel it is unnecessary and very foolish to even consider opening the EEZ-Zone to commercial and recreational fishing.

I often use as an example the fishery regulations for striped bass on the eastern seaboard when I am talking with Members of Parliament about preserving the bass stocks in UK waters. What you have achieved over the years working with sports fishers, environmentalists and commercial fishing interests has been outstanding. Do not undo all the good work that has been achieved over the past years. Now is the time to conserve and see what happens. If you give in to commercial fishing interests, which means an increase in netting, I believe this disease that has the potential to be devastating the striped bass population.

It must be pointed out that the striped bass is worth hundreds of dollars as a sports fish and only a handful of dollars as dead fish on the fish mongers slab. The commercial caught fish can only be caught once but as a sports fish they are caught several times over. Its a well known fact the fish are too valuable to catch once.

I believe the tourist trade will be hit very hard, many UK anglers visit the eastern seaboard for one or two weeks of striper fishing. In fact I will be across again in September with a group of anglers. Remember we hold our fish stocks in trust for the youngsters not yet born. We must not forget kids hooked on fishing don't stick an hypodermic needle in their arm later in life. I am more than willing to visit and discuss the effects of commercial netting on your tourism industry and fish stocks.



Your sincerely

Martin James

RECEIVED  
8/15/03 #56

August 14, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange

I feel strongly that the EEZ should remain closed. I enjoy fishing in the bay and the Ocean with my trusty boat, rod, and reels. I think it would be a shame for these days to at some point be the good ol days.

Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the most recent round of commercial increases will not be know for some time into the future. What is known is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

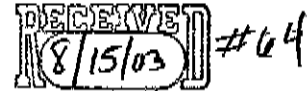
The ASMFC petition to open the EEZ was spearheaded by representatives of a few coastal states to make it easier for their commercial fishermen to catch more striped bass. In fact this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. That increase in commercial harvest comes at the expense of the recreational fishing public who are being deprived of a public resource.

In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, there have been reports that a large percentage of Chesapeake Bay striped bass carry a dangerous micro bacterial infection. Anglers in the New England states have reported catching diseased fish, so it is inevitable that stripers in the EEZ will also be infected. Further, it will be impossible to police an opening of the EEZ, and stripers landed in the EEZ will pose problems for gamefish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC which do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters.

The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. The fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ. NMFS is constantly attacked as anti recreational fishing, and for having a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing. DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!

Sincerely,

  
Joe Hart  
Virginia Beach, Virginia



Friday, August 15, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief, State--Fed Fisheries  
Div. NMFS Office of sustainable fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Anne:

Don't open the striper season to commercial and recreational outside of the three mile line as is being proposed. Have we forgotten ten years ago when we just about ruined this fishery? Please stop this madness. If anything is done, we need to set and enforce quotas and further limit the commercial catch from November to May so that all of the 40" fish are not depleted as these are holding the future of the fishery in their reproductive systems.

Thank you for giving this important issue the focus necessary to prevent a backslide and future disaster to the fishery that we have finally managed back into its present good state.

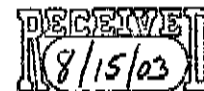
Sincerely,

David B. Mulholland  
6401 Patterson Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23226

FROM :D1(OAN)

FAX NO. :6172238073

Aug. 15 2003 10:06AM P1



#61

Dear Ms. Lange,

My name is Captain David Waldrip and I own and operate a 32' charter fishing vessel named RELENTLESS out of Scituate, Massachusetts that is located south of Boston. I strongly support opening the EEZ for fishing of striped bass for both recreational and commercial rod and reel fishing. Most of my business is cod charters followed by striped bass trips. At times customers desire combination trips, fishing for striped bass and cod during the same day. This is a unique opportunity for someone chartering from an inland region that only goes fishing every couple of years. The problem with these trips is that the striped bass fishing is better in the early morning, which means you cannot retain your legal size striped bass because the cod are in the EEZ. By opening up the EEZ it would allow us to conduct these trips helping us during tough economic times.

Currently fishing inshore (State Waters) has become extremely crowded with more people fishing for striped bass now that the stocks are at record levels. Unless you are out there at first light, it is actually unpleasant especially when trying to put paying customers on fish. By opening up the EEZ it will eliminate much of this congestion allowing boats to spread out.

Another situation in the Massachusetts Bay area is, if you leave Boston, Gloucester or Scituate, fish Race Point or the outer area of Cape Cod (waters not in EEZ) you must cross the EEZ to go home. This poses the problem of once again being in possession of striped bass caught in state waters while transiting the EEZ.

I have fisherman speak at public hearings state they fish in the EEZ all they want, as there is no enforcement out there. With the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> and law enforcement agencies providing more and more security patrols in busy harbors this is most likely true. My recommendation is to eliminate this enforcement problem by making it legal to fish and possess striped bass in the EEZ.

In conclusion by opening up the EEZ with striped bass stocks at a record high, the fishery will be easier to enforce, help charter boats during tough economic times and definitely free up the congested coastal waters.

Thank you for your consideration in opening the EEZ.

Sincerely,

*D. Waldrip*  
Captain Dave Waldrip  
80 Green St  
Rockland, MA 02370

159

Joan Sharrott  
44 Champlain Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10306

August 11, 2003

Anne Lange Chief, State/Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD. 20910

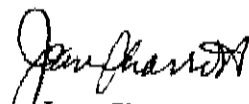
RE:  
50 CFR Part 697, Docket No 030714172-3172-01  
I.D. 063003A

Dear Ms. Lange,

I am writing to you to express my opposition to the opening of the EEZ Zone for Striped Bass. I feel the opening of this area would have a negative affect on the current fish stocks of striped bass. As a recreational angler, I have tried to maintain a conservative approach when fishing for striped bass. I feel the National Marine Fisheries Service should do the same. It took many years to get to where we are today. I don't want to start going backwards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

  
Joan Sharrott

# Salt Water

S P O R T S M A N

33 Summer Street

Boston, MA 02210

Tel 617-303-3660

Fax 617-303-3661

RECEIVED  
AUG 18 2003

#120

8/18/03

Ms. Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
NMFS  
1315 East West Highway, Rm 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

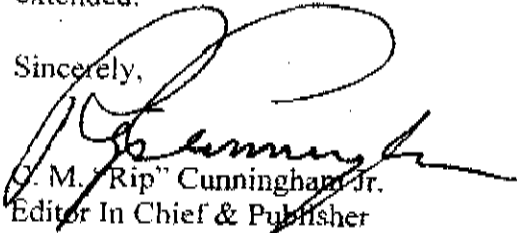
Dear Ms. Lange:

As Editor In Chief and Publisher of *Salt Water Sportsman*, the largest salt water fishing magazine in the world with 1.6 million readers, I am writing concerning the proposed rulemaking to open the EEZ to the harvest of Atlantic Striped bass.

We are opposed to the opening of the EEZ for the commercial taking of striped bass. While the commercial harvest within the Atlantic States is controlled by hard quotas, there still remain many questions about trans-shipped catches that could end up in any number of uncontrolled ports. Control of catches and enforcement of regulations will be problematic at best.

We also feel that the comment period for this proposed rulemaking should be extended.

Sincerely,



O. M. "Rip" Cunningham Jr.  
Editor In Chief & Publisher



# 124

Fax Transmission from

Kent Sherrington  
16 Wythburn close  
Burnley  
Lancs.  
England  
UK  
BB12 8XE

16/08/03

Anne Lange Chief State Federal Fisheries Div.  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway RM 13317  
Silver Spring MD 20910

**Ref: Re opening of EEZ-Zone**

Dear Madam,

Let me please say how disturbed I am to find that the EEZ-Zone is under consideration for opening to recreational and commercial fishing. It always will puzzle me as to why we cannot accept the simple fact that certain fish are worth an incalculable amount more if left to grow and prosper in their natural environment. Sport fishermen release their catch and pay thousands of Dollars into the economy for each fish- we are in it to have fun not draw a profit (often the origins of this money we pay out is coming from a different economy altogether from the one into which it is spent) however a dead fish on the fishmongers slab only directly benefits he who killed it and he who sold it. Yes I know there is a little tax paid etc. but how can that compare with the \$4000 I spent on my last trip to merely release these wonderful fish.

As a member of BASS a society for our own European Bass enthusiast and The Bass Restoration Project (a political lobbying group active through Europe) which is desperately trying to protect our own stock from chronic over exploitation of the like your own land suffered from previously, I cannot even begin to explain to you how disappointed we would feel in Europe if your dept. ruined our often used glowing example of success. The equation is a simple one SELL IT AND LOOSE IT!

Don't for one second think that size limits are effective conservation tools, as you would need staff to be present on every boat, every day for them to be adhered to correctly. Over here we call these Illegal landings "black fish." Anyway what is the point in having an undersized fish die on deck or in the nets only to put it back in the sea to feed the Gulls?

Yours Hopefully

Mr C. K. Sherrington



#123

Trawler Abracadabra Inc.  
338 Lakeview Lane  
Cape May, NJ 08204

Ph: 609-886-2575

Fax: 609-886-2116

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

- via fax -

Dear Ms. Lange,

I fully support the recommendation the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has made to the Secretary of Commerce that the moratorium on the harvest of Atlantic striped bass in the EEZ that has been in effect for 13 years be removed.

As stated in the Federal Register on July 21, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 139):

- "In 1995, the (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries) Commission declared the Atlantic striped bass population fully restored"
- "Since then the population has expanded to record levels of abundance...."
- "The Commission believes that the measures contained in Amendment 6 are necessary to prevent the overfishing of the Atlantic striped bass resource while allowing growth in both the commercial and recreational fishery...."
- "Amendment 6 incorporates results of the most recent Atlantic striped bass stock assessment, developed by the Atlantic Coast States, the Commission, NMFS, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In summary, the 2001 stock assessment concluded that the overall abundance of the stock is very high and fishing mortality remains below the target rate."

There is no question that the striped bass stocks are recovered and are in fact at record levels of abundance.

The continued closure of the fishery in the EEZ imposes undue and unnecessary hardships on the affected fishermen, both recreational and commercial; it forces a significant and increasing amount of fishing effort into an artificially constrained area, the continuous and obvious flaunting of the EEZ closure is contributing to a decline in the angling public's "respect" of management measures in general, and the enforcement resources that are expended on policing the striped bass

moratorium can certainly be more beneficially employed elsewhere. The moratorium is also responsible for the ongoing and totally unnecessary bycatch (and regulatory discarding) of striped bass in other fisheries pursued in the EEZ. This bycatch very often generates an unnecessary level of animosity between recreational and commercial harvesters.

I have been aware of a growing clamor being raised by certain recreational fishing activist groups against the opening of the EEZ. Their arguments seem to focus on the (apparently purposely perpetuated) misconception that a commercial striped bass fishery couldn't be effectively monitored and that appropriate conservation measures wouldn't be enforced in an EEZ fishery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Striped bass are no different from the dozens of other fish species that are sought in the waters of the EEZ. They are caught with the same gear in the same areas and follow the same paths to market. An EEZ fishery for striped bass can be monitored and regulated by the same personnel using the same methodologies that have proved so effective in these other fisheries.

Further, I must strenuously urge NMFS to ignore what I expect to be a significant amount of pressure from the angling public instigated by recreational fishing activists and their organizations and based on misinformation rather than objective science. Such inaccurate and biased rhetoric as that reproduced below (from something called the "Stripers Forever" website and aimed at stirring up sentiment in the angling community to make striped bass a "gamefish"), while undoubtedly capable of generating political pressure, has no place in influencing management decisions.

Stripers Forever feels strongly that there are not enough striped bass in the Atlantic to provide both a quality recreational fishery and a commercial harvest. But because the ASMFC has a well-documented bias towards commercial harvesters – indeed, managing commercial fisheries occupies most of their time – recreational fishermen have been left in the lurch.

The striped bass is unquestionably one of the most studied fish species we have. We know what the science says. The EEZ fishery can be open. We know what the managers say. The EEZ should be open. There are no reasonable arguments against the proposed ending of the EEZ moratorium and I therefore concur with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in recommending its opening.

Sincerely,  
Jim Harris, President

Trawler Abracadabra Inc.

#122

**Garden State Seafood Association**  
212 West State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

- via fax -

Re: ANPR Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act; Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery

Dear Ms. Lange,

Garden State Seafood Association fully supports the recommendation the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has made to the Secretary of Commerce that the moratorium on the harvest of Atlantic striped bass in the EEZ that has been in effect for 13 years be removed.

As stated in the Federal Register on July 21, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 139):

- "In 1995, the (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries) Commission declared the Atlantic striped bass population fully restored"
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There is no question that the striped bass stocks are recovered and are in fact at record levels of abundance.

The continued closure of the fishery in the EEZ imposes undue and unnecessary hardships on the affected fishermen, both recreational and commercial; it forces a significant and increasing amount of fishing effort into an artificially constrained area, the continuous and obvious flaunting of the EEZ closure is contributing to a decline in the angling public's "respect" of management measures in general, and the enforcement resources that are expended on policing the striped bass moratorium can certainly be more beneficially employed elsewhere. The moratorium is also responsible for the ongoing and totally unnecessary bycatch (and regulatory discarding) of striped

bass in other fisheries pursued in the EEZ. This bycatch very often generates an unnecessary level of animosity between recreational and commercial harvesters.

We have been aware of a growing clamor being raised by certain recreational fishing activist groups against the opening of the EEZ. Their arguments seem to focus on the (apparently purposely perpetuated) misconception that a commercial striped bass fishery couldn't be effectively monitored and that appropriate conservation measures wouldn't be enforced in an EEZ fishery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Striped bass are no different from the dozens of other fish species that are sought in the waters of the EEZ. They are caught with the same gear in the same areas and follow the same paths to market. An EEZ fishery for striped bass can be monitored and regulated by the same personnel using the same methodologies that have proven so effective in these other fisheries.

Further, we must strenuously urge NMFS to ignore what we expect to be a significant amount of pressure from the angling public instigated by recreational fishing activists and their organizations and based on misinformation rather than objective science. Such inaccurate and biased rhetoric as that reproduced below (from something called the "Stripers Forever" website and aimed at stirring up sentiment in the angling community to make striped bass a "gamefish"), while undoubtedly capable of generating political pressure, has no place in influencing management decisions.

*"Stripers Forever feels strongly that there are not enough striped bass in the Atlantic to provide both a quality recreational fishery and a commercial harvest. But because the ASMFC has a well-documented bias towards commercial harvesters – indeed, managing commercial fisheries occupies most of their time – recreational fishermen have been left in the lurch."*

The striped bass is unquestionably one of the most studied fish species we have. We know what the science says. The EEZ fishery can be open. We know what the managers say. The EEZ fishery should be open. There are no reasonable arguments against the proposed ending of the EEZ moratorium and we therefore concur with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in recommending its opening.

Sincerely,



Jeff Reichle, President  
Garden State Seafood Association

**Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association  
P. O. Box 238  
Marshfield Hills, MA 02051**

8/18/03 #130

**August 18, 2003**

**Ms. Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Div.  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
NMFS**

**1315 East West Highway, room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910**

**Dear Ms. Lange,**

**My name is Thomas DePersia and I own and operate a sportfishing charter business out of Marshfield, MA. I am also president of Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association. This Association is made up of about 50 members from Massachusetts. Our membership stongly supports the recommendations from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to the Secretary of Commerce to: (1.) remove the moritorium on the harvest of Atlantic striped bass in the EEZ; (2.) implement a 28 inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial Atlantic striped bass fisheries in the EEZ; and (3.) allow states the ability to adopt more restrictive rules for fisherman and vessels licensed in their juristiction.**

**The membership of our association supports and agrees with all of the reasons that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commision used in their recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce to justify opening the EEZ to striped bass fishing.**

**In addition to the ASMFC reasons for justification, our membership also feels: (1.) opening of the EEZ will relieve current pressure on inland hot spots; and (2.) opening the EEZ will allow charter boats to fish for striped bass first and then go offshore for other species on their combination trips for tuna, shark etc. Current law prohibits possession of striped bass in the EEZ regardless of where they were caught. This has been a major burden on charter boats for many years.**

**Please remove the moratorium on the harvest of striped bass in the EEZ. Thank-You.**

Sincerely



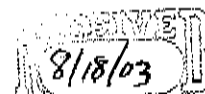
**Capt. Thomas DePersia ,President  
Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association  
Bigfish II Sportfishing Charters**

**CC: William Hogarth,Dir. NMFS  
Mr. Paul Diadoti, Dir., Mass. Div. of Marine Fisheries  
Governor Mitt Romney  
Dr. Rebecca Lent, Deputy Asst. Administrator NMFS**

FROM : PHFH

FAX NO. : 7575910455

Aug. 18 2003 01:22PM P1



131

**FAX****PENINSULA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  
P.O. BOX 1443, NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23601  
Office: 757-596-5553 Fax: 757-591-0455**DATE: 8/18/03TO: ANNE LANGE, Chief - NMFSFAX #: 301-713-0596FROM: LORRAINE AustinPAGES (including cover): 1RE: OFF-shore Striper

As a RECREATIONAL FISHER I strongly urge  
Continuing to keep the EEZ CLOSED to  
Striped Bass for all, commercial and recreational  
Fishing.



141

Braden C. Fleming, Ph.D.  
62 Limerock Road  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

August 13, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange

As a concerned recreational striped bass fisherman, I oppose any movement to open the EEZ to the taking of striped bass.

Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the most recent round of commercial increases will not be known for some time into the future. What is known is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need additional pressure on the resource.

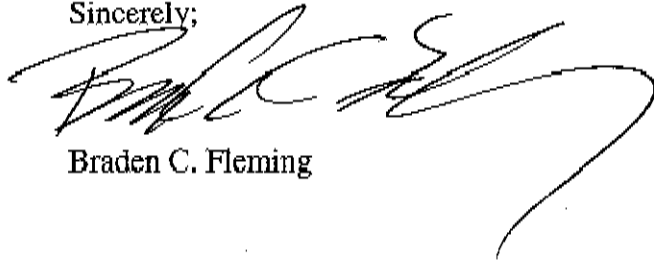
The ASMFC petition to open the EEZ was spearheaded by representatives of a few coastal states to make it easier for their commercial fishermen to catch more striped bass. In fact this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. That increase in commercial harvest comes at the expense of the recreational fishing public who are being deprived of a public resource.

In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, there have been reports that a large percentage of Chesapeake Bay striped bass carry a dangerous micro bacterial infection. Anglers in the New England states have reported catching diseased fish, so it is inevitable that stripers in the EEZ will also be infected. Further, it will be impossible to police an opening of the EEZ, and stripers landed in the EEZ will pose problems for gamefish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC which do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters.

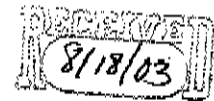


The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. The fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ. NMFS is constantly attacked as anti recreational fishing, and for having a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing. PLEASE DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Braden C. Fleming', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Braden C. Fleming



151

I. Tatnall Starr  
877 Andorra Road  
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

August 14, 2003

Ms. Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Proposed opening of EEZ to Striped Bass Fishing

Dear Ms. Lange:

I am writing to express my opposition to the opening of the EEZ to striped bass fishing.

It is already being observed by many recreational striped bass fishers that the quality of the inshore fishery has begun to deteriorate as a consequence of the numbers of fish taken both by recreational and commercial interests. The effects of the recent increases in the allowable harvest by commercial fishermen will not be known for some years. In the meantime the huge industry serving recreational striped bass fishermen – boat manufacturers and dealers, tackle manufacturers and dealers, guide services, etc. – are at risk. The EEZ has been off limits to all striped bass fishing and has served as a refuge for the fishery. I believe the fish need this protection, particularly until valid scientific evidence indicates otherwise.

It would be most gratifying to see the ASMFC and NMFS lean against the persistent trend to increase striped bass harvests. Not opening the EEZ to striped bass fishing would be a positive step in that direction.

Sincerely yours,

I. Tatnall Starr



157

Robert B. Allen D.D.S.  
*Practice of Dentistry*  
1 Charlton Drive  
Hampton, Virginia

August 14, 2003

Ms Anne Lange  
NMFS Chief, State-Fed. Fish Div.  
Silver Spring, Md.

Dear Ms. Lange,


I received a notice that NMFS is considering opening the EEZ to harvest of Striped Bass.

That is a decision which would only favor commerical harvests which have displayed a complete disregard for conservation of this important fishery. The average recreational boater (which number in millions) will be unable to fish in the EEZ.

Also this will merely conflict with many states which have differing regulations from those being considered by NMFS regarding stripers and the EEZ.

Please keep this closed area as a resource pool to maintain the super striper fishery since the 7 year moratorium restored the fishery.

Respectfully,

  
Robert B Allen  
Hampton, VA

om: George Schuchman Fax: +1(757)482 8190

To: Anne Lange

Fax: +1(301)713-0596

Page 1 of 1 Monday, August 18, 2003 4:10 PM

RECEIVED  
8/18/03 #66

# FAX

**Date:** Monday, August 18, 2003

**Pages including cover sheet:** 1

<b>To:</b>	Anne Lange
<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Fax Phone</b>	+1(301)713-0596

<b>From:</b>	George Schuchman
	COMPAQ
	809 Blackthorne Drive
	Chesapeake
	VA 23322
<b>Phone</b>	+1(757)482 8190
<b>Fax Phone</b>	+1(757)482 8190

**NOTE:**

Dear Anne,

This is to voice my concern and disapproval of opening the EEZ to the harvesting of Striped Bass. I feel we have made great strides in protecting and propagating this species, and I would not want to do anything that would disturb the present arrangement.

Sincerely,

George Schuchman

Aug 18 03 04:24p

dennis picard

508-430-0223

p.1



August 18, 2003

Anne Lange  
Chief, State- Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
NMFS  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Fax: (301) 713-0596

Re: Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act; Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR)

Dear Ms. Lange:

I am responding to your request for comments on potential management measures and other issues relating to a reopening of the EEZ to Stripe Bass fishing. I operate a charter boat service from Harwichport, Massachusetts. During a typical week in season I take recreational fishing parties out five to six days a week. A typical fishing party is three to five adults, teenagers and children from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island or New York who want a recreational experience while visiting Cape Cod. Depending on the weather I usually fish from east of Monomoy Island to south of Nantucket Island for bluefish or stripers.

Massachusetts Striped Bass fishing management is already effective. The Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries manages Striped Bass fishing through limitations on recreational Striped Bass landings. As Captain, I take my responsibility very seriously to ensure my fishing parties comply with these management directives. Since catch limits are set against landings opening the EEZ will not change the number of fish caught or retained on a given day. For this reason I am in agreement with the Commission recommendation to remove the moratorium on EEZ fishing and retain strong controls at the state level. State control at point of landing works, regardless of where the fish was taken, and ensures disciplined control of any EEZ fishing effort.

Catch and release mortality will not increase with EEZ opening. When I go into the EEZ fishing for bluefish it's impossible to avoid catching stripers which live in the same rips and shoal areas. Offshore the waters are cooler and the fish are more lively. It's my experience that in the summer months the Stripers caught offshore in the cooler waters are more lively and therefore most survive release with minimal loss. From my experience, I would suggest that overall Striper mortality for an equivalent fishing effort is less further offshore because of the cooler water conditions. If this is the case, then an EEZ opening for directed striped bass fishing would be positive for the stock relative to forcing all fishing to occur near shore in warmer waters.

EEZ opening will not cause an increase in fishing effort. I have heard arguments against EEZ opening that would result in more boats engaged in fishing. This is unlikely. Fishermen who enjoy fishing from boats have other species, for example bluefish, to cause them to already own or seek out a boat for fishing. Opening to Striper fishing will not cause a significant increase in boat purchases.

Opening the EEZ will improve boating safety. During the busy summer months I generally take my parties further offshore to avoid the near-shore boating congestion from the large number of smaller trailer-boats. It's a serious safety problem when 30 to 40 foot charter boats try to maneuver in and around the large number of 16-22 foot trailer boats that hug the near-shore. It would be a definite improvement if properly equipped and USCG inspected boats were able to regularly fish for Stripers beyond three miles.




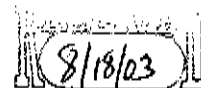
#65

In summary, controls are in place within the states to effectively manage the Striped Bass stock and there is reason why the EEZ should be opened.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. If you have any question I can be reached at the above address or on my mobile phone: (508) 432-3089.

Sincerely,

  
Captain Fred Clancy  
16 Shaggy Pine Road  
West Harwich, Mass 02671

# 18  
8/12/03

Anne Lange  
Chief, State-Federal Fisheries Division  
NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Lange,

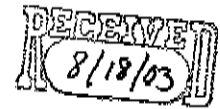
I am contacting you to express my comments on NMFS considering potential revisions to the Federal Atlantic striped bass regulations for the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), those waters 3 to 300 miles offshore, in response to recommendations from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to the Secretary of Commerce.

I feel that if the NMFS were to open the EZZ to any kind of fishing it would disrupt the states ability to manage the striped bass populations. Plus it would create a nightmare of tangled state and federal management plans.

To protect the striped bass fisheries, by adhering to the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act and not disrupt management of striped bass by the states, I request that NMFS support the continued closure of the EEZ.

Thank you,

James Ross  
500 58<sup>th</sup> Street  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451



August 12, 2003

Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange

As a full-time guiding striped bass charter captain, I oppose any movement to open the EEZ to the taking of striped bass. Illegal fishing in the EEZ has been openly practiced and to my knowledge never been prosecuted. The very people who have been violating the law are the ones advocating the opening of the EEZ to striped bass fishing.

Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the most recent round of commercial increases will not be known for some time into the future. What is known is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

The ASMFC petition to open the EEZ was spearheaded by representatives of a few coastal states to make it easier for their commercial fishermen to catch more striped bass. In fact this measure passed the ASMFC as the result of a 6 to 5 vote, hardly a mandate. Every measure of public comment has consistently been against reopening the EEZ. That increase in commercial harvest comes at the expense of the recreational fishing public who are being deprived of a public resource.

In addition to the conservation implications of reopening the EEZ, there have been reports that a large percentage of Chesapeake Bay striped bass carry a dangerous micro bacterial infection. Anglers in the New England states have reported catching diseased fish, so it is inevitable that stripers in the EEZ will also be infected. Further, it will be impossible to police an opening of the EEZ, and stripers landed in the EEZ will pose problems for gamefish states like ME, NH, CT, DC, NJ, PA, and SC which do not allow the sale of fish caught in their waters.

The EEZ has been off limits to all fishing for stripers, and serves as a refuge for striped bass. The fish need this refuge. There is no valid, scientific reason to reopen the EEZ. NMFS is constantly attacked as anti recreational fishing, and for having a poor conservation ethic. Here is a chance for NMFS to do the right thing. **DO NOT REOPEN THE EEZ TO STRIPED BASS FISHING!!!**

Sincerely;

Captain Doug Jowett  
61 Four Wheel Drive  
Brunswick, Maine 04011



August 12, 2003



Anne Lange, Chief  
State-Federal Fisheries Division  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Room 13317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lange

As a personal use striped bass fisherman, I oppose any movement to open the EEZ to the taking of striped bass.

Despite some highly questionable population estimates from the ASMFC, most informed anglers feel strongly that near-shore striped bass recreational fishing has declined significantly in quality over the last few years as commercial quotas have increased. The effects of the most recent round of commercial increases will not be known for some time into the future. What is known is that more than 3,000,000 recreational anglers, as well as a huge guiding and tackle industry along the East Coast, depend on the continued availability of good striped bass fishing. We do not need more pressure on the resource.

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Sincerely,

*Joe Horvath*  
105 Liberty St.  
Trenton, N.J. 08611-2621

e-mail

HORVATHJ@PRINCETON.EDU

115. Last year Sept. 2002 just after Labor Day, the commercial trawler appeared within a stones throw of Barnegat Inlet jetty. It seemed that whenever a school of fish appeared within 10 or 15 mins the netters would appear and scoop up everything. The month of Sept. 10/23/2003 09:32AM,

CAPTAIN DONALD G. LOOS US - NAVY (RET)

1014 MERIDIAN STREET

FALL RIVER, MA 02720

508-673-2874



9/3/03

DEAR CURT LANGE,

RE: OPENING OF THE ECONOMIC ZONE  
TO STRIPED BASS FISHING.

I HIGHLY URGE YOU TO LEAVE  
THE BASS ALONE, DO NOT OPEN IT -  
CLOSE THE BASS FISHERY TO ALL  
COMMERCIAL FISHING, INCLUDING BOAT &  
REEL OR AUTHORIZED SLOT LIMITS (DO  
YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT IS?) FOR  
27" - 34" FISH ONLY - LEAVE THE BUSINESS  
DONE.

YOUR DEPT. HAS SCREWED THE WHOLE  
FISHING BUSINESS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS  
THROUGH THE WORST MANAGEMENT WE HAVE  
EVER SEEN IN MY 20 YRS ON THE  
PLANET.

V/T/Y

